



Poems

By . . .

Blanche Elmore

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❧ ❧ ❧ Born Blind ❧ ❧ ❧

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BLANCHÉ ELMORE

Poems.

BY

BLANCHE ELMORE.

(FOURTH SERIES.)

A DEED OF HEROISM.

O'ER the hushed and sleeping city
In the silence of the night,
Comes a cry of deepest anguish,
Full of terror and affright.

By a thousand distant echoes
Caught and carried far and wide,
Till as many eager voices
Swell the crowd on every side.

What is it ? this cry ascending ;
Ah ! 'tis needless to enquire,
For the Heaven itself seems ringing
With one dread word, Fire ! Fire !

Ere as yet the words are spoken,
Through the darkness of the night,
In a mighty burst of triumph
Flames leap forth in mad delight.

Useless are the mighty engines ;
 All man's great inventions vain,
 Naught can save the burning building
 Though they strive with might and main.

But again ! that cry of terror ;
 Louder, deeper than before,
 Like to which but few have listened,
 Rises on the air once more.

For amid the burning building
 Stands a woman, young and fair,
 Holding in her arms an infant,
 Silent, in her great despair.

Fast the cruel flames leap onward,
 Eager to embrace their prey,
 Strong men gaze in stony horror ;
 Women wring their hands and pray.

Gracious, Father ! help and save them !
 Each heart prays in terror wild,
 While in agony the mother
 Holds aloft the little child.

Surely God has heard their pleading,
 And will help them in their need ;
 One is found whose noble spirit
 Shrinks not from the daring deed.

One whose courage never falters,
 Though he feels the fiery breath,
 And has often paused exhausted
 In the noble fight 'gainst death.

Breathless stand the mighty army,
 While the mother's tearless eyes,
 Full of agonized entreaty
 Pray for pity from the skies.

Courage ! Courage ! help has reached them,
 Gracious heaven ! the fight is won ;
 In the arms held to receive him
 She has placed her little son.

See the fiery tongues advancing ;
 Now they reach her form so slight,
 One dread moment—all is over,
 She has passed beyond our sight.

Even as the flames enfold her,
 O'er her face a look of joy
 Steals, for He her prayer has answered,
 And has saved her infant boy.

CANADA.

ON the blue Canadian waters,
 'Neath the blue Canadian sky,
 When the silent moon is shedding
 Silvery radiance from on high ;
 Where my fancy loves to linger,
 While I let my barklet glide,
 Down the swiftly flowing river,
 On the bosom of the tide.

And the scene spread out before me
 In its desolation grand,
 Rocks, whose crests the clouds have hidden,
 Native giants of the land ;
 Trees whose branches kiss the waters,
 Islands dotted here and there ;
 As I thread the winding river,
 Beauties new are everywhere.

And as if to lend completeness
 To the moonlit picture bright
 Here a tiny house and clearing
 Unexpected comes in sight ;
 And I catch the cheery glimmer
 Of the firelight through the door,
 But my bark goes gliding onward
 Some new beauty to explore.

But it needs a perfect poet,
 One whom beauty can inspire
 With that kind of holy rapture
 Mortals seldom can acquire,
 To portray in glowing colors
 Half the beauties of the night ;
 Oh ! that sweet Canadian river
 When the moon is shining bright.

IN MEMORIAM.

GOD sent me a tiny treasure,
 A beautiful baby boy,
 To fill all my life with pleasure
 My heart with a new found joy,
 For a while I held my darling,
 And gazed on the little face
 Which learned to smile at my coming,
 With innocent baby grace.

But God saw how sad this world was,
 How full of sorrow and pain,
 And He wished to shield my darling
 From suffering, sin and stain;
 So he called the little spirit
 Back to the realms above
 To find in His arms a shelter,
 Safe in His infinite love.

But I miss the clinging presence
 Of the babe I hushed to rest,
 And 'tis sometimes hard to whisper
 That God in His love knows best,
 And I long to clasp my darling
 Close to my desolate heart,
 And to feel he knows and loves me,
 Though our spirits be apart.

Somewhere in the mystic future,
 In the brighter, better land,
 I shall see again my darling
 'Mid the holy angel band,

And shall meet the look of greeting
 And affection in his eyes,
 As he whispers, " Welcome, Mother ! "
 In tones of glad surprise.

THE TWO VOYAGES

A SHIP sailed forth on a sea of glass,
 Away to an unknown shore ;
 Into the shadow I saw her pass,
 To return to port no more.
 I knew that the vessel would never reach
 The haven toward which she pressed,
 But would founder out on the cruel beach,
 Gulfed in a sea of unrest.

For Mammon sat at the helm and steered,
 And her freight was all of gold,
 The crew were shadows and phantoms weird
 Of misers gruesome and old,
 And Sin commanded and ruled them all,
 While Death stood there by his side,
 And silence hung like a dismal pall
 Above them on every side.

And ere the shadows of even fell,
 The ship was far out of sight
 But the Evil One alone can tell
 Where she vanished in the night.

Perchance in triumph he claimed his own,
 But the secret of the sea
 Must ever remain to me unknown,
 Shrouded in mystery.

A tiny bark on the ocean wide,
 Set out, yet I did not fear ;
 I knew that the hand at the helm could guide
 The craft to the harbor near.
 The crew were spirits so pure and white,
 That God himself led the way
 Out of the sea of darkness and night
 To the light of Eternal Day.

This bark was freighted with Faith and Love,
 And floated o'er waters deep,
 While Hope's bright pinions were spread above,
 All harm from her course to keep ;
 And darkness grew o'er land and sea,
 Yet I, by the sun's last gleam,
 Saw that from danger the bark was free
 And safe on a placid stream.

ON THE RUINS OF ROME.

I GAZE upon thy ruins, Rome,
 And seem to see once more,
 Thy domes and temples rearing high
 Their crests towards the azure sky
 In splendor as of yore.

Ere time's destroying hand had touched,
 Or grim and stern decay
 Had robbed thee of thy wealth and fame,
 And left thee glorious but in name—
 A name which lives for aye.

No more do thy deserted streets
 Re-echo with the tread
 Of stately dames whose beauty rare
 Urge gallantry to do and dare,
 And for them life's blood shed.

No more a Cæsar holds his sway,
 Or rules with iron hand
 Those countless armies ever near
 To fight for him with sword and spear,
 And die at his command.

Thou stirred the heart with nobler thoughts,
 Ambition roused to fire,
 To be like they, the true and brave,
 Who died their liberty to save,
 Their fame their first desire.

Yes, thou our homage can'st command,
 Sublime e'en in thy fall,
 We picture all thy vanished power,
 Which passed as t'were in one brief hour,
 Beyond all man's recall.

TO MY MOTHER.

TO THOU, who from my earliest infancy
With fondest love hath ever guarded me,
Who taught me first to lisp my evening prayer,
And soothed my every childish grief and care,
My mother dear, these lines I dedicate,
When far away your eyes do contemplate
Through loving tears these words which do but say
One half the things my spirit would convey.

May the dim future to thy heart unfold
Blessings as deep and wide as ocean old,
Each tender hope half formed within thy breast
Be gratified ere yet it be expressed ;
And may the birth of every dawning year
Enrich thy full content, my mother dear,
And Time, 'neath whose decree we all must bow,
Leave no deep furrows on thy placid brow.

May thy declining years in peace abound
And deeds of kindness thy life surround,
May we, who know our mother's fond caress
Repay tenfold that love and tenderness.
If wishes could bring happiness, Ah ! then
Thy life should never know a care again,
For I would place an angel ever near
To wipe away each sad, regretful tear.

HARP OF OUR SIREs.

TENDEREST sympathy dwells in thy tones,
 Voicing the thought of our inmost desires ;
 Passionate melody
 Pathos and harmony,
 All are combined in thee,
 Harp of our sires.

Thrilling with rapture the spirit of man,
 Easing the world-weary soul of its pain,
 What heart could long repine,
 When from that voice of thine,
 Breaks forth in song divine
 Wonderful strain !

Sighing with pity for those who must weep,
 Touching the hidden thoughts deep in the breast,
 Soft as the summer breeze,
 Sighing through forest trees,
 Thine is the power to please,
 Harp of the blest.

Mystical blending of laughter and tears,
 Exquisite mingling of pleasure and pain,
 Every emotion rare,
 Gladness and dark despair,
 Sunshine and tender prayer,
 Echo again.

Ah ! but I never could hope to portray
 Half that thy magical music inspires ;
 Sweetness without alloy,
 Filling the soul with joy
 No power can e'er destroy,
 Harp of our sires.

THE DYING SOLDIER.

ALONE, upon his pallet bed
With none to shed a farewell tear,
With no loved hand to hold his own
Or friend to breathe a word of cheer,
Lay one, who but an hour ago
Had been the bravest of the brave,
And nobly risked his life in vain,
The honor of his flag to save.

But now the battle cries were hushed,
The enemy had gained the day,
And as the dying soldier thought
Of all the staunch true hearts that lay
Now cold upon the battle-field,
Never to throb with hope again,
Never to feel the breath of life,
Strove to forget his own great pain.

He pictured mothers, sweethearts, wives,
Waiting far o'er the deep blue sea,
Deeming not those for whom they prayed
Were launched in vast eternity;
Never again would they behold
The faces that they loved so well,
Which now lie silent, still and cold
With the foe's fierce cry for their knell.

But brighter thoughts now come to cheer
The dying hero on his way,
He saw again the dear old home,
The garden where he used to stray,

With one whose pictured face had been
 Close to his heart by day and night
 Urging him on to glorious deeds,
 His star of truth, his guiding light.

And as the death-film dimmed his eyes,
 A radiant smile stole o'er his face,
 All earthly thoughts passed from his mind,
 And strange sweet fancies took their place.
 He saw that cherished form again,
 A crown upon her golden hair,
 Beside a river's bank she stood
 And beckoned him to join her there.

And sweet low music filled his ear,
 She came and led him by the hand
 Over the waters dark and drear,
 Into a glad and happy land.
 A sigh of infinite content
 Escaped the gallant soldier's breast,
 His pain, his suffering all was o'er,
 His gallant spirit found its rest.

DREAMINGS.

LIFE is worth living if only to find
 The wondrous workings of the human mind,
 How each year adds more knowledge to our store,
 E'en from our birth, till memory is no more.

Yet toil, and strive, and struggle as we may
Till eyes are dim, and tresses growing grey,
We still may learn new lessons as we go,
The more we seek, the less we seem to know.

The child who brings with triumph in his eyes,
From school his first and well-deserved prize ;
The youth who studies through the long drear night
Till the bright dawn makes dim his feeble light.

The scholar who may proudly take his stand
Among the great and learned of the land ;
All these will find as on their way they go,
How much there is that man may never know.

If man could will to live from age to age,
And each year saw him grow more good and sage,
Dissatisfied with all he still would be,
And seek to solve some deeper mystery.

Be happy then and seek not learned lore,
A lesson take from those who have gone before,
Wear not your life in useless toil away,
For life at best is but a day.



THE PATH OF THE STORM.

A BREATHLESS silence in the air,
A solemn stillness everywhere ;
Across the grey face of the sky,
Dark clouds go swiftly scudding by ;
Over the black and sombre wood
A strange oppression seems to brood.

The cattle stand in trembling fear,
The storm they fear is drawing near ;
Nature, in hushed expectancy,
Waits for its coming patiently ;
While yet more densely overhead,
A gloom as if the night has spread.

A breath, a sudden sultry blast,
Shivers the leaves and hurries past,
Breaking the strangely weird calm,
Filling the heart with vague alarm,
And now a sudden rush of rain,
Beats sharply on the window pane.

The storm is here ! on every side
It flings defiance far and wide,
And loud the storm-fiend laughs with mirth,
While chaos reigns upon the earth ;
The tempests still more madly rage,
While wind and rain their battle wage.

The streamlet down the mountain side
Becomes a river deep and wide,
The birds in vain for shelter fly,

And wearied with the struggle, die.
The whole earth trembles to its core,
While still the shrieking furies roar.

But suddenly its wrath is laid—
Its wild, unheeding progress stayed,
Less wildly howls the threatening blast,
The fury of the storm has passed,
Less pitiless the beating rain
Falls—and the earth is glad, again.

The thunder mutters far away,
The lightnings cease their vivid play,
While through the clouds the sun appears,
Smiling above a vale of tears ;
Once more the joyous song of bird
Among the greenwood boughs is heard.

THE SLUMBER SONG.

'Tis eventide : the dewy mists
Hang o'er the distant hill,
The tiny stars come out to keep
Watch o'er you, darling, while you sleep,
And all around is still.

The golden grain waves to and fro,
Fanned by the gentle breeze ;
While overhead the nightingale
Pours forth its sweet and mournful wail
Among the forest trees.

The jasmine taps against the pane,
 The dew-drops glisten bright
 Within the heart of every flower
 In this serene and quiet hour,
 That heralds in the night.

Then sleep, my child, and have no fear,
 Sleep till the dawn of day,
 For holy angels guard thy head,
 Their wings of light are o'er thee spread,
 To keep all harm away.

Dream of the land of Peace and Hope,
 Above the bright blue skies,
 Where dwells the God of light and love,
 Who sent thee from the heaven above,
 To glad thy mother's eyes.

PALACE OF CLOUDS.

In a mystical land, gay with many bright flowers,
 Where birds ever sang in the tall shady trees,
 Where the sorrows of earth never dimmed the glad
 hours [breeze.
 And Love seemed to laugh on the sweet zephyr
 I, in fancy, created a Palace, which ever
 Arrayed in the strength of its beauty shall stand ;
 But, alas for my hopes, with the first stress of weather
 I knew its foundation was built on the sand.

All the beautiful dreams which had filled me with
 pleasure,
 Had passed with my ærial castle away,
 And the land, gay with sunshine and ev'ry fair
 treasure, [and grey.
 Now slumbered 'neath skies which were threat'ning

As I stood 'mid the ruins of Fancy's creation
 A desolate feeling awoke in my breast,
 For the castle I'd built with such pride and elation.
 Was only a Palace of Clouds at the best.

Why should all of our brightest illusions thus vanish,
 And dreams that are fairest so swiftly forsake?
 While the pain and regret that we can never quite
 banish,
 For ever in silence the lone heart will ache.

I've seen all the flowers in my Fairyland perish,
 Beneath the cold blast of a chill winter day,
 I have watched every tender hope wither and perish,
 My beautiful Palace in mist pass away.

STRAY THOUGHTS.

WE never like to lose them,
 Those happy, youthful days,
 When life, all joy and gladness,
 Spread out before our gaze;
 When Fancy, wandering ever
 Through fields of new delight,
 Can paint in fairy colors
 The future glad and bright.

We never like to lose them,
 Those first sweet dreams of Love,
 Ideal as the star-shine
 The smiling earth above,
 Though passing with the Summer,
 Still is their memory dear,
 Recalling days of sunshine
 Through many a darkened year.

We never like to lose them,
 The friends of long ago,
 Whose kindly, genial faces,
 With truthfulness aglow,
 Were ever wont to greet us
 With welcome in their eyes,
 When life was in its springtime,
 And cloudless all our skies.

We never like to lose them,
 The hopes which help us bear
 The weary hours of heart-ache
 Which every heart must share.
 They find a silver lining
 To every cloud-dimmed sky,
 And whisper to the spirit
 Of sunshine bye and bye.

We never like to lose them,
 Those promises divine,
 Of life which is eternal,—
 The land where none repine,
 Where tender love and pity
 Will ease the weary breast,
 And those who here have suffered
 Shall find forever Rest.

A FLOW'RET.

I PLANTED a tiny seedling,
 And watched it with tender care,
 Till the germ put forth a blossom—
 A blossom of beauty rare.
 Each morn as its leaves unfolded,
 To drink of the heaven-sent dew,
 And bask 'neath the sun's caresses,
 Its marvellous beauty grew.

Out of my well-kept garden,
 This flower with its petals white
 I had learned to love and cherish,
 And tend with a new delight ;
 So all through the gladsome summer
 It bloomed in its strength and pride ;
 But with autumn's first chill breezes
 My beautiful flow'et died.

And I could not help contrasting
 My flower with the hopes of men,
 Which bloom but a short-lived summer.
 Only to perish again.
 For Hope is a fragile blossom,
 To guard as some precious thing,
 Which blooms like my tiny flow'et,
 When our life is in its spring.

YOU AND I.

WILL you sometimes, love, remember,
 When the even draweth nigh,
 When the last faint gleam of twilight
 Fades from out the western sky,
 How in colors rich and rare
 We would paint the future fair,
 As we wandered in the gloaming,
 You and I ?

Do you sometimes, love, remember,
 Days that all too swiftly fled ?
 Or were all your vows forgotten
 Ere the autumn leaves were shed ?
 Is the heart that once I knew
 Just as tender, kind and true ?
 Or is all the happy past
 For ever dead ?

Is it only in remembrance
 We may catch the sweet refrain
 Of that short-lived dream of gladness,
 Ere we parted, love, in pain ?
 " Shall we never dearly stand
 Soul to soul and hand to hand ? "
 Nevermore, while life shall last,
 To part again ?

But, however it may be, dear,
 There is one who prays for you,—
 One whose love will never falter,
 One whose heart is ever true—
 True, as in the days of old,
 When your vows of love were told,
 As we wandered home together,
 Through the dew.

FRIENDSHIP.

I KNOW my heart will not forget
 The vow that long ago we swore,
 To be to each a friend so true,
 That absence should but bind anew
 Our spirits, and make yet more sure
 The tie we promised should endure,
 Till thought and memory were no more.

And thus I know, though far I've roamed,
 And long have dwelt 'neath alien climes,
 Across the turbid, tossing sea,
 Thy thoughts will ever follow me,
 And reach the hand of friendship rare,
 Which lives through every grief and care,
 For the memory of long gone times.

And when upon my native heath
 I stand once more—ah! then I know
 That thy dear voice, and thy dear hand,
 Will welcome to his native land
 The one, who long hath prayed in vain
 To see thy cherished face again
 Replete with holy friendship's glow.

Happy are they who have a friend,
 One who in every hope has part,
 And, though the world their actions blame,
 Will love and trust in them the same,
 Ever a loving presence near,
 To comfort with a word of cheer,
 And gladden the weary heart.

